



U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor  
2201 C Street, NW, Room 7827  
Washington, D.C. 20520  
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/>

# **Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for Statements of Interest**

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***PLEASE REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT WHEN PREPARING A STATEMENT OF INTEREST.***

## **Eligibility**

### **Eligible Applicants**

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) welcomes applications in response to DRL solicitations from U.S.-based and foreign-based non-profit organizations/non-government organizations (NGO) and public international organizations; private, public, or state institutions of higher education; or in some instances, if allowed in the solicitation and subject to additional approvals, for-profit organizations or businesses. Applicants must also have existing, or the capacity to develop, active partnerships with thematic partners or in-country partners, entities and relevant stakeholders including industry and NGOs and have demonstrable experience in administering successful and preferably similar projects. DRL encourages applications from foreign-based NGOs headquartered in the geographic regions/countries relevant to the applicable solicitation. Applicants may form consortia and submit a combined Statement of Interest (SOI). However, one organization should be designated as the lead applicant with the other members as sub-award partners. DRL reserves the right to request additional background information on applicants that do not have previous experience administering federal grant awards, and these applicants may be subject to limited funding on a pilot basis. Please refer to the applicable solicitation for any additional eligibility criteria.

Please note: the Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31, Cost Accounting Standards, and Part 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

DRL is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. DRL welcomes applications irrespective of an applicant's race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or other status. DRL encourages applications from organizations working with the most at risk and vulnerable communities, including women, youths, persons with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities, and LGBT persons.

Please note: no entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System now incorporated as part of the **System for Award Management (SAM)** is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities under an award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." All applicants are strongly encouraged to verify that an organization is not excluded on SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

## Eligibility Requirements

All organizations, whether based in the U.S. or in another country, must have a **Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Number (DUNS)** and an active registration with SAM in order to receive awards from DRL or submit an application through Grants.gov. Organizations submitting an application through GrantSolutions.gov may not need a DUNS or an active registration in SAM at the time of submitting an application, but will be required to have this in order to receive the award. Registering in SAM could take up to 4 weeks or longer, and DRL encourages applicants to begin the registration process as soon as possible. For further guidance on the registration process, please see the Registration Guide on DRL's website <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>.

## Technical Eligibility

Technically eligible applications are those which:

- 1) Arrive electronically via GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov by the designated due date and time noted in the solicitation;
- 2) Are in English; and,
- 3) Heeds all instructions and do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the solicitation and this PSI.

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all of the material submitted in the grant application package is complete, accurate, and current. DRL strongly encourages all applicants, especially foreign or first-time applicants, to submit applications before the designated due date to ensure that the application has been received and is complete.

## Application Requirements

### Format Requirements

For all application documents, please ensure:

- 1) All pages are numbered;
- 2) All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and,
- 3) All documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins.

### Required Application Components

Complete SOI applications must include the following:

1. Completed and signed SF-424 and SF424B, as directed on GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov; and,
2. Executive Summary (not to exceed three [3] pages in Microsoft Word) that includes:
  - a) A table listing:
    - i. The target country/countries;
    - ii. The total amount of funding requested from DRL, total amount of cost-share (if any), and total program amount (DRL funds + cost-share); and,
    - iii. Program length;

- b) A statement of work or synopsis of the program, including a brief statement on how the project will have a demonstrated impact;
- c) A concise breakdown explicitly identifying the project's objectives and the activities and expected results that contribute to each objective; and,
- d) A brief description of the applicant(s) that demonstrates applicant(s) expertise and capacity to implement the program and manage a U.S. government award.

Please note: DRL retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this PSI. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the Department of State Review Panel will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further. DRL encourages organizations to use the given space effectively.

## **Guidelines for Application Components**

### **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars**

For Federal awards starting before December 26, 2014, organizations should be familiar with OMB Circulars A-110 (Revised) 22 CFR 145 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Nonprofit Organizations), A-122/A-21 (Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations; Indirect Costs), and A-133/A-128 (Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Organizations) on cost accounting principles. For a copy of the OMB circulars cited, please contact Government Publications or download from [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_default](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default).

Starting from December 26, 2014, OMB Uniform Guidance: Cost Principles, Audit, and Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al.) will take effect. All applicants should be familiar with the Uniform Guidance and be aware that all awards made on or after December 26, 2014 will be made with terms and conditions subject to the Uniform Guidance. Applications that are submitted before December 26, 2014 for Federal awards to be made on or after December 26, 2014 should be developed in accordance with the Uniform Guidance. For a copy of the Uniform Guidance, please contact Government Publications or download from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-12-26/pdf/2013-30465.pdf>.

### **SF-424 Forms**

Organizations must fill out, sign, and submit SF-424 and SF-424B forms as directed on GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov. Please refer to the following guidelines as you fill out the SF-424:

1. Type of Submission: Application
2. Type of Application: New
3. Date Received: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned.
4. Applicant Identifier: Leave blank
- 5a. Federal Entity Identifier: Leave blank
- 5b. Federal Award Identifier: Leave blank
6. Date Received by State: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned
7. State Application Identified: Leave blank. This will automatically be assigned

- 8a. Enter the legal name of the applicant organization. Do NOT list abbreviations or acronyms unless they are part of the organization's legal name.
- 8b. Employer/Taxpayer ID Number: Non-U.S. organizations enter 44-4444444 (no dash)
- 8c. Enter organizational DUNS number (Data Universal Numbering System). If a DUNS number is not required at time of submission, please enter 4444-44444 (no dash).
- 8d. Enter the address of the applicant
- 8e. Enter the name of the primary organizational unit (and department or division, if applicable) that will undertake the assistance activity, if applicable
- 8f. Enter the name, title, and all contact information of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application
9. Select an applicant type (type of organization)
10. Enter: Department of State
11. The CFDA number is normally 19.345. However, please see the solicitation if another CFDA number should be used instead.
12. Enter the Funding Opportunity Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
13. Enter the Competition Identification Number and title. This number will already be entered on electronic applications.
14. Areas Affected by Project: List the country or countries where project activities will take place in alphabetical order; for projects that will take place in more than one region enter "Global"
15. Enter the title of your proposed project (if necessary, delete pre-printed wording)
16. Congressional districts of Applicant and Program: If based in the U.S. please enter congressional district; if unknown or a foreign applicant, please enter "90."
- 16b. For congressional district of program, please enter "90."
17. Please refer to the solicitation for the estimated start date and enter your projected end date
- 18a. Enter the amount requested for the project described in the proposal under "Federal"
- 18b. Enter any cost-share under "Applicant". Otherwise, use zeros.
19. Enter "c"
20. Select the appropriate box. If you answer "yes" to this question you will be required to provide an explanation.
21. Enter the name, title, and all contact information of the individual authorized to sign for the application on behalf of the applicant organization.

Please fill in the highlighted fields of the SF-424B: Page 2 - Complete applicant organization and title of authorized official sections. The Authorized Official is generally the grant signatory at the organization or business. **The person who signs the 424B must have legal authority to do so on behalf of the organization.**

## SOI Submission Instructions

The U.S. Department of State requires applications be submitted electronically via [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov) or [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Both systems require registration by the applying organization. Please note: the Grants.gov registration process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all registration steps are completed in a timely manner.

**It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has an active registration in GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov and that an application has been received by GrantSolutions.gov or Grants.gov in its entirety. DRL bears no responsibility for applicants not being registered before the due date or for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

**GrantSolutions.gov is highly recommended for submission of all applications and is DRL's preferred choice for receiving applications.**

Faxed, couriered, or emailed documents will not be accepted. Applicants must follow all formatting instructions in the applicable solicitation and these instructions.

### **GrantSolutions.gov Applications**

All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications via [www.grantsolutions.gov](http://www.grantsolutions.gov).

Applicants using GrantSolutions.gov for the first time should complete their "New Organization Registration" as soon as possible. This process must be completed before an application can be submitted. Registration with GrantSolutions.gov usually occurs directly after an applicant submits their registration. To register with GrantSolutions.gov, click "Login to GrantSolutions" and follow the "First Time Users" link to the "New Organization Registration Page." There are different ways to register your organization, click on the link that fits best.

Upon completion of a successful electronic application submission, the GrantSolutions system will provide the applicant with a confirmation page indicating the date and time (Eastern Time) of the electronic application submission as well as an official Application Number. This confirmation page will also provide a listing of all items that constitute the final application submission. Please save this page for your records.

#### **GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk:**

For assistance with GrantSolutions.gov accounts and technical issues related to the system, please contact Customer Support at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) or call 1-866-577-0771 (toll charges for international callers) or 1-202-401-5282. Customer Support is available 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday, except federal holidays.

### **Grants.gov Applications**

Applicants who do not submit applications via GrantSolutions.gov may submit via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). It is DRL's preference that applications be submitted through GrantSolutions.gov.

Please be advised that completing all the necessary registration steps for obtaining a username and password from Grants.gov **can take more than two weeks**. A valid DUNS number and an active registration in SAM are both required prior to submitting an application via Grants.gov.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again,



validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. DRL will not automatically notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

Grants.gov Helpdesk:

For assistance with Grants.gov, please call the Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or email [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except federal holidays.

## **SOI Review Process**

DRL strives to ensure each application receives a balanced evaluation by the Department of State (DOS) Review Panel. All SOIs for a given solicitation are reviewed against the same three criteria. These criteria are:

- 1) Quality of Program Idea/Inclusivity of Marginalized Populations;
- 2) Program Planning; and,
- 3) Ability to Achieve Objectives/Institutional Capacity.

Additionally, the Panel will evaluate how the SOI meets the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and the priority needs of DRL overall. Panelists review each SOI individually against the evaluation criteria, not against competing SOIs.

In most cases, the Department of State Review Panel includes representatives from DRL and the appropriate Department of State regional bureau, which requests feedback on applications from the appropriate U.S. embassies. In some cases, additional panelists may participate, including from other Department of State bureaus or offices, U.S. government departments, agencies, or boards, representatives from partner governments, or representatives from entities that are in a public-private partnership with DRL. At the end of discussion on an application, the panel votes on recommending the application for approval by the DRL Assistant Secretary. Once approved by the DRL Assistant Secretary, applicants of successful SOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal based on their SOI. Unless directed otherwise by the applicant, DRL may also refer SOIs for possible consideration in other U.S. government related funding opportunities. The Grants Officer Representative (GOR) for the eventual award does not vote on the panel.

Department of State Review Panels may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed program, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of limited DRL funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and program activities.

With the exception of technical submission questions, during the solicitation period U.S. Department of State staff in Washington and overseas shall not discuss competing applications with applicants until the review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.



For further information on the DRL grants process, please see the DRL website:  
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/index.htm>

## **SOI Review Criteria**

SOIs should address the three specific criteria described below:

### **Quality of Program Idea/Inclusivity of Marginalized Populations**

SOIs should be responsive to the solicitation, appropriate in the country/regional context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to DRL's mission of promoting human rights and democracy. DRL typically does not fund programs that continue an organization's ongoing work (funded by DRL or other sources), but prioritizes innovative, stand-alone programs. In countries where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated. Projects that have a strong academic, research, conference, or dialogue focus may not be deemed competitive. DRL strongly discourages health or science related projects unless they have an explicit component related to the requested program objectives in the solicitation.

**DRL strives to ensure its programs advance the rights and uphold the dignity of the most at risk and vulnerable populations, including women, youth, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. To the extent possible, applicants should identify and address considerations to support these populations in all proposed program activities and objectives as appropriate. Applicants should provide a strong justification if it determines it is not feasible or appropriate to incorporate the most at risk and vulnerable populations within proposed program activities and objectives. Applications that do incorporate the most at risk and vulnerable populations will be viewed favorably in this category.**

### **Program Planning**

A strong SOI will include a clear articulation of how the proposed program activities and expected results (both outputs and outcomes) contribute to specific program objectives and the overall program goal. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable, results-focused, and achievable in a reasonable time frame.

### **Ability to Achieve Objectives/Institutional Capacity**

SOIs should address how the program will engage relevant stakeholders and should identify local partners as appropriate. If local partners are identified, applicants should describe the division of labor among the direct applicant and any local partners. SOIs should demonstrate the organizations' expertise and previous experience in administering successful projects, preferably similar projects targeting the requested program area or similarly challenging program environments.

## **Additional Information**

DRL will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization, whether or not elected members of government.

Applicants should be aware that DRL considers submitted applications proprietary and will make all efforts to protect information contained in the application. DRL will not voluntarily provide application documents nor divulge their contents outside the U.S. government unless it is part of the aforementioned review process. Please note that DRL cannot guarantee that we will be able to shield applications from disclosure if faced with a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or other disclosure statutes. While we will try to assert FOIA exemptions where defensible, FOIA denials can be challenged in court and we cannot guarantee that the documents will ultimately be protected from public disclosure requirements.

### **Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction (xx 2014)**

(b) In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

(1) Was “convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or

(2) Has any “unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the unpaid tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”.

For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

(c) Applicant represents that –

(1) It is ☐ is not ☐ an organization that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months.

(2) It is ☐ is not ☐ an organization that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.